



Louisiana Agricultural Statistics Service

5825 Florida Blvd.
Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70806
Phone: (225) 922-1362

In Cooperation With:
Louisiana Department of
Agriculture & Forestry
Louisiana State University
Agriculture Center

Dear Friends in Agriculture:

Each year, we remind you that our mission is *to serve Louisiana, its agriculture and its rural communities by providing meaningful, accurate and objective statistical information and services*. The Farm Bill of 2002 makes that mission more important than ever to Louisiana farmers. The government depends upon NASS's published estimates for calculation of counter-cyclical payments, and disaster assistance payments are also calculated using NASS data.

The price and weather challenges of crop year 2002 have already brought home just how important accurate agricultural statistics are. Prices remained low in 2002, and disaster struck nearly all commodity enterprises via Tropical Storm Isidore, Hurricane Lily and the weeks of unrelenting rain that followed. Calculation of sugarcane disaster loss payments and sweet potato disaster loss payments from 2002 are just two applications of NASS data which may prove critical to Louisiana farmers.

As always, it's in every farmer's best interest to make sure NASS's data are as accurate as possible. We work hard on behalf of Louisiana Agriculture, but our work depends upon the support and cooperation of Louisiana's farmers, ranchers and agribusiness people. The data are theirs. They are the main source of the information we use to provide the statistics upon which Louisiana agriculture depends, and we thank them for their contribution to the industry we believe in and strive to serve.

We are proud of the cooperative agreements and the vital partnership we have with the Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry, Louisiana State University, the LSU Agricultural Center and the Louisiana Agricultural Experiment Stations. It is through these agreements that we produce Louisiana Agricultural Statistics each year.

We produce many other state-level reports and estimates which are available via the internet at www.nass.usda.gov/la. Automatic e-mail subscriptions are available for many of our reports, and instructions for subscribing are available via the *Publications* link on our website. Please contact us anytime for statistics, information, questions or comments.

Now, more than ever, Louisiana Agriculture needs and deserves the best, most accurate statistical information we can provide. We need your ongoing help and support to ensure that the information is available.

Louisiana counts on Agriculture.

Sincerely,

Dave Frank
State Statistician